

"Did you think," said Janet, "that I wished him to be worse?"

"Oh! I don't know. I used to think you liked Charley Meredith; but I'm almost sure you don't now."

"One may not care for a man, and yet one may be glad he is better. I am sick," cried Janet, unable to control herself, "of hearing his name."

"Oh, so am I!" cried Julia. "Isn't it enough to make one ill? And now there will be more of it than ever. We shall all be wanted to rejoice over him. I wish he had gone to his own chambers to be killed, and not here."

By this time they had reached the school-room, which was their common property, and where no one could interfere with their talk. Julia threw herself into a chair before the fire and pursued her inquiries.

"Did you ever think to yourself," she said, "Janet, how it was that Charley should have been assaulted like that?"

"Think!" said Janet, faltering. "I don't know what good thinking would do."

"That may be," said Julia, "but one can't help thinking, though it may do no good. I hate him so much myself that I understand it better than you can, who used to like him. It must have been some one who hated him—even more than me."

"Don't talk so about a—a crime, Julia: and don't say me instead of I," Janet cried, hoping to stop this embarrassing discussion.

"Oh, what does stupid grammar matter! My opinion is that it must have been something about a girl."

"Julia!" cried the governess, taking refuge in the shock of conventional horror at such a suggestion from such a quarter.

"Oh, you know as well as I do what Charley was. I have heard even mamma say that he couldn't resist making himself agreeable, whoever it was. That's mamma's way of putting it. Why, he has made eyes even at me—Gussy's sister, and only fifteen, and hating him as I do! It stands to reason that he did it to everybody else. And suppose there was some silly girl who thought it meant something, and somebody belonging to her who wouldn't put up with it? Oh, I've wished often I was a man and could knock him down!"

"When a man is lying so ill as he is, it is dreadful to talk of hating him."

"Oh, but you can't help it, however dreadful it may be! and, besides, he's getting better. You don't like him yourself."